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26

# GREAT TRUTHS:

BY

MGR. DE SEGUR.

AUTHOR OF FREQUENT COMMUNION, CONFESSION,  
SHORT AND FAMILIAR ANSWERS TO OBJEC-  
TIONS AGAINST RELIGION, &c.

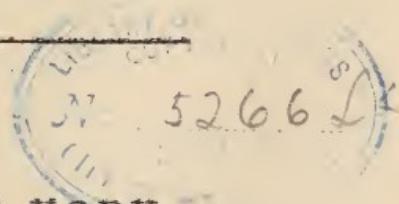
*TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH*

BY A

CATHOLIC PRIEST.

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# GREAT TRUTHS,

BY

MONSEIGNEUR DE SEGUR.

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## I.

IS IT ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN THAT WE ARE NOT BEASTS?

Not long ago a kind hearted man, who was a well-to-do farmer of a department in the neighborhood of Paris, allowed himself to be indoctrinated by a certain Free Mason, an ardent reader of the *Siecle*, and a warm partizan of Socialism. The farmer, returning one evening from his work, commenced to think—in the style of a barbarian.

He buried his head in his hands, in order to have clearer ideas ; and thus,

reflecting and reasoning after his fashion, he asked himself this question—Whether there was an essential difference—a difference worth speaking of, between him and his dog, his cat, his ass or his ox. “My dog,” he said, “it is true, has four feet, and I have but two. He has a head; so have I. He eats and I eat. He drinks, and so do I. He sleeps, he gets warm, he becomes cold, he hears, he sees, he breathes, and so do I. He is very intelligent, and I am not such a great blockhead myself. He lives, he gets sick and dies; and I live as he does, and one day I will die. Is it not absolutely the same thing?”

A neighbor meanwhile enters. It was the physician, a man skilled in his profession (although a country physician), and, what was better still, an honest man and very learned.

After the usual polite salutations,

the physician said : “ What now is wrong with you, neighbor ? You look very queer to-day.” “ Well, I am reflecting,” answers the kind-hearted man, “ and it seems to me that there is very little difference between us and the beasts.” And he moreover undertook to develop his ideas.

The physician, pressing his lips in order not to laugh, let him tell his story ; and when he had finished : “ Now listen well, my good man,” said he to him very gravely, “ you are nothing but a beast, a brute, a mere animal.”

The farmer looks at him, stands up, frowns and shuts his fist : “ What is this that you say ? ” he cried out in anger ; “ you insult me ! ”

“ Not at all,” quietly answered the other ; “ I simply say the same as you do ; I say that you are what you be-

lieve yourself to be." And commencing to speak seriously with the poor, simple man, he showed him of what value his reasonings were, and whither bad doctrines lead us.

The farmer had great reason to be filled with indignation at hearing himself called a beast, a brute, a mere animal. And when a comrade hearing you speak, instead of giving an answer, begins to call you "a beast, a brute, a mere animal," you would become very angry, and would very likely answer by giving him a blow with your fist; and you would have good reason to do it, and why so? Because, to confound man with the beast, is to insult him grossly; it is to deprive him of his reason and of those qualities that he holds dearest.

It is the same among the impious and the atheists, good sense yet remains—

common sense—which attests and cries out to us: Man is not a beast ; man is above the animal, inasmuch as he is endowed with a reason, a conscience and a soul.

The brute has not, like us, a reasonable and immortal soul ; he acts but by instinct, without ever being able to perfect himself, without ever being capable of good or of evil, whilst man has an immortal soul, reasonable, free, capable of reflecting and of judging, capable of meriting by doing good, and demeriting by doing evil.

That which thinks in us is our soul ; that which in us is generous, devoted, loving, good, patient, charitable, is our soul ; and with the wicked, it is still the soul that does evil, that deceives his neighbor, plots and meditates evil doings. The body is but the instrument of the soul, sometimes for good,

sometimes for evil ; the soul is in the body as is the workman in the midst of his tools. It is the workman who works; yet he works but by means of his tools.

Man is, then, composed of a soul and of a body ; the animal, on the contrary, has but a body, with some instincts that God has given it for the preservation and the well-being of its body. These instincts are blind forces, irresistible powers which it follows without knowing why. It has not, like us, a reasonable and free soul, capable of knowing the truth, of loving and wishing well to our neighbor. It is this that constitutes between man and beast such a vast difference. Man is a person, while the beast is but a thing.

All people, ancient and modern, all great men, even pagans and idolaters, have agreed on this point.

Do you know who are the persons

that doubt of the existence of the soul ? They are those who live as beasts. Lately, at Paris, a person brought to a good Religious an apprentice, fifteen or sixteen years of age, whose bad conduct made his honest parents despair of him. The Religious spoke to him with sweetness and firmness, trying to make him re-enter into himself and to lead him to repentance. All his efforts were useless. The miserable fellow, always answering in a surly voice, said : “I wish to be a dog, to do evil without remorse !” Such are the class of persons who doubt about their soul, and who finish sometimes by persuading themselves that they have not one.

It is then quite sure and absolutely certain that we are not beasts ; and you in particular, my dear reader, by the very fact that you understand what I say, and judge that I reason correctly,

you show that, far from being a beast, you have a mind capable of judging. This is your soul, and it is your soul alone that gives you the power of thinking and judging.

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## II.

## IS IT ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN THAT THERE IS A LIVING GOD, CREATOR OF ALL THINGS?

This is also so certain, so evident, that there was never a people in any age who has doubted of it. They have, indeed, often altered the idea of a God ; but never have they been able to destroy it. This grand voice of humanity which proclaims that there is a living God, Creator of all things, is the voice of common sense—that is to say, of the common sentiment of all men.

If any one were to think otherwise,

he would not have common sense ; this is evident. What folly, then, to imagine that one is right in opposition to the opinion of the whole world ; above all, when at the head of this innumerable host are found the greatest geniuses, the most profound philosophers, the learned, the most respected !

Just as in looking at your clock it is impossible for you to doubt that there was a clock-maker, so, in viewing the immense and marvellous machine which they call the universe, it is impossible for a man of good sense to doubt for a single moment that there is a Being, Creator of all things, sovereignly powerful, infinitely wise ; a Being supreme, sovereign, on whom all depends, and who depends on nothing, who has created all and who has not been made. Now, this is that admirable, eternal, incomprehensible, all-per-

fect, infinite Being who is called God.

The word God signifies: I am who am. When you hear some grossly ignorant person, or some wicked and impious fellow say: "There is no God," it is as if he said: That one who is is not. This is absurd, is it not so? Just as if one wanted to say that what is white is not white; that what is round is not round, and that two and two do not make four.

Bear it well in mind; people doubt the existence of the good God only when they have an interest to do so. Where does one ordinarily hear this foul blasphemy? In the public houses, uttered by filthy drunkards; in the prison cells and places of confinement for galley slaves, uttered by thieves, scoundrels, jail birds, those who are truly wicked—the offcasts of society. This cry comes from below, never from

on high. It accompanies crime, never virtue.

Then, in regard to this point as for the preceding, you can be absolutely certain, my dear reader, that there is a God, Creator and Sovereign Lord of all that exists. We cannot see Him with the eyes of the body, because He is a pure Spirit! It is the same in regard to my soul, which you do not see, and which you do not touch, yet it really exists for all that. God is everywhere and in all things; He is within us, in our soul; He sees us at all times and places, and nothing, not even the most secret thoughts, can be concealed from His all-powerful gaze.

Dogs, cats and other animals do not know God, their Creator; but they have the sense not to boast of it. Men who say that there is no God, and who boast of it, descend lower than animals.

They do not believe the first word of what they say, and it is not necessary to take the trouble to make them serious.

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### III.

#### IS IT ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN THAT THERE IS A TRUE RELIGION, AND THAT WE CANNOT IGNORE IT?

That there is a true religion is a necessity, as is the existence of God; it is a truth proclaimed by common sense, admitted by all peoples and at all times, openly professed by the entire human race.

Religion is that which unites God to man and man to God. Religion is the knowledge of God, the service of God and the love of God.

It is quite evident that, having received from God an intelligence capa-

ble of knowing Him, we should, before everything else, seek to know our God and Creator, for this knowledge is the most important, the grandest, the most excellent that we can ever acquire.

It is evident also that, created by God and for God, we belong to Him, we are His servants and His children ; that we should obey His laws ; that we should render to Him all the homage that He deserves ; should adore Him because He is God ; pray to Him because He is the source of all good ; love Him because He is our Father and the best of Fathers ; obey Him because He is the Supreme Master ; fear His justice because He is infinitely holy and detests evil. We are on this earth, before all other things, in order thus to know, to serve and to love our God and Creator.

And religion is nothing else than the assemblage of all our homages and of

all these duties. From the commencement of the world, God revealed Himself, that is to say made Himself known to the first man, and Himself deigned to teach what was good and what was evil, what it was necessary to believe and to do in order to accomplish the will of the Creator.

There is, then, a true religion as there is a true God. Religion is the principal business of all men who have been, who are and who will be. A man without religion is an eye without light, a body without life, a fish out of water. The person who lives without religion is a being gone astray, a poor, ignorant creature who does not know why he exists, a bad son who forgets and blasphemers his father. Religion is the nourishment of the soul, the true life of the soul, the first and the most essential of all goods.

Then it is absolutely certain that there is a true religion, and that it is impossible for a reasonable man to live without religion.

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## IV.

**IS IT ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN THAT THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION IS THE TRUE RELIGION ?**

The most intelligent and impudent of our impious ones very frankly confess that if there is a God and a religion, this God is the God of Christians, and this religion the Christian religion. This acknowledgement is sufficient for us to be certain that the Christian religion is the true religion ; because, on the one side, common sense clearly attests the evidence of the existence of God, likewise the necessity and exist-

ence of religion in general, and on the other, our enemies confess that, if this is the case, the Christian religion is divine.

The Christian religion is the only religion that has proofs. The false religions (the Mahometanism of the Turks and of the Bedouins, the Buddhism of the peoples of Asia, the fetechism of the savages and of the negroes, the idolatry of the pagans) cannot sustain the examination of a serious man; and one easily sees that they are human inventions, without proofs, without foundation. The true religion, on the contrary, carries conviction with it at first sight to the reason of man, and even when she tells him to believe things which he cannot understand, she makes him understand very clearly that he should accept and believe them without understanding them. The true religion

sets forth her titles before our reason, as honest people voluntarily show their passports to the public officers ; and these public officers, instead of stopping those who carry them, give them aid and protection. The rogue, on the contrary, has no passport, or, what is worse, he has only a false one ; and if the officer is a little sharp, he easily perceives it and seizes at once both the man and the passport.

The Christian religion, being true and divine, being made for men in order to render them good and happy, does not fear the scrutinizing gaze of human reason ; very far from this, she courts the examination of all men, exposes to them the proofs of her divinity, answers clearly their difficulties, and in enjoining on them all, on the part of God, to submit to her authority, she only demands from them, a submission agree-

able to reason, and consequently reasonable.

The incredulous are men who do not reason, or who reason badly. This rule has no exceptions. They revile, they calumniate, they get angry ; but they do not reason at all. They despise what they ignore ; in attacking Christianity, they do not understand what they say, or perhaps, what happens still oftener, they do not believe what they say. We Christians are altogether different : we give good sound reasons for our belief; we are logical and reasonable men; we believe what we affirm.

And let no one say : “ Every religion says the same thing.” This is not true. False religions have no proofs, and they do not care about having any ; they are composed of superstition more or less gross, which are imposed on men, sometimes by the sword and by

fear, as Mahometanism ; sometimes by the sole force of habit, as the prevailing religions of Asia and of Africa. Moreover, they are all very convenient, they flatter the passions, and every one knows how men are disposed to adopt as true the doctrines that flatter them.

The Christian religion is the true religion, the true worship of the true God. What it teaches, it is God who teaches it ; what it orders, what it prohibits, it is God who orders and who prohibits it.

It embraces all ages ; it runs back even to the cradle of the world, even to the first man to whom God has revealed it ; it will last to the end of the world, and even when time is no more, during all eternity.

The more one studies it, the more logical, beautiful, harmonious, grand, admirable he finds it. It rests on proofs

that cannot be gainsaid ; it is as a fortress built on a rock ; it is true, it is divine ; it comes from God, it leads to God ; it is the true religion of God.

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## V.

**IS IT ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN THAT THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION IS THE ONLY TRUE RELIGION ?**

If it is the true religion, it is the only true one ; because there cannot be on the earth two true religions.

Indeed, of two things, it must be either one or the other ; either the two religions teach the same doctrines and command the same things, or they teach different doctrines and impose different laws. In the first case, they are not two distinct religions, but one and the same. In the second, either of

the two is necessarily in error. Yes and No cannot be true at the same time in regard to the same thing. For example: The Christian religion teaches that there are three persons in one God; that the second divine person became man; that the Pope and the Catholic Bishops are the legitimate ministers of religion, and that men should believe them and obey them if they wish to save their souls. It teaches that there are seven sacraments; that Jesus Christ is present in the Sacrament of the Eucharist; that after death there is the judgment, followed by eternal happiness for the good, and by eternal misery for the wicked, etc. Take another religion. On several, or even on one of these points, it teaches differently from the Christian religion. It is evident that either one or the other is mistaken. Now, a religion that teaches error, if

but on one point alone, is not, cannot be, the true religion of the God of truth. God cannot be mistaken, and His religion, which is His word, His teaching, His law, is equally inaccessible to error.

There are not, then, on the earth two true religions. With the exception of the Christian religion, all the other religions of the earth are false. They are perversions of the true religion deviating more or less from the truth. All the truth and goodness that one sees in them belongs to Christianity—comes from Christianity.

Among the false religions, the least remote from the true religion is the Russian and Greek schism; after that, the Anglican heresy; then Lutheranism; then the Calvanistic sects; then Judaism; then Mahometanism; then the Buddhism of India and of China;

in fine, the brutal idolatry and fetichism of the poor savages.

Unbelievers and atheists are outside all this, because they do not preserve even the notion of a God and of a religion.

In religion, as in mathematics, truth is absolute. That which is true is true, and whatever deviates from the truth, falls immediately and necessarily into error. Let us thank God that we are Christians and that we possess the true religion.

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## VI.

### IS IT ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN THAT JESUS CHRIST IS GOD MADE MAN ?

This point, which is the centre of the Christian religion, is also as certain as the existence of God. Either there is no God, no soul, no good, no evil, no

truth, no error; either this, or Jesus Christ is God and the Christian religion is divine. Our incredulous moderns confess this openly; and it is because they do not wish to believe in Jesus Christ that they are led to speak thus in spite of themselves, or else impudently to deny the existence of God, or at least to conceal this frightful blasphemy under beautiful words destined to make their disciples swallow the bitter draught.

The miracles of our Lord Jesus Christ, and above all the sublime miracles of His Resurrection and of His Ascension to heaven, worked in open day before hundreds and thousands of witnesses, in presence of enraged enemies who were all powerful and capable of judging aright, are indeed proofs so evident of the divinity of the Son of Mary, that the incredulous, even the

most cunning, such as Voltaire, Rousseau, Renan and company, are compelled by them, when they wish to explain them, to speak such gross foolishness that they seem to ridicule their readers and hearers. They do all that they can ; but what can they do against truth ? How can one prove that two and two do not make four ? How prove that what is true is not true ! That Jerusalem has not seen what it has seen ? That the appearance of the world has been changed without cause ?

The Jews, at seeing the miracles of Jesus Christ and of His Apostles, said among themselves with a fruitless anger : “They perform miracles, and we cannot deny it !” If the Jews themselves could not deny it, because it was too evident, too palpable, who can reasonably deny it ? Our poor unbelievers are, in truth, worse than the

Jews ; they could at least remonstrate against it to Caiphas and to Pilate.

Jesus Christ is the Eternal Son of God, equal to the Father and to the Holy Ghost, made man in the womb of the Virgin Mary. Jesus Christ is God in the midst of us ; He is the Creator, the Lord and the Saviour of men ; He came down in the midst of us in order to be the Head of Religion, the High Priest of God here below, the Doctor of Truth and the perfect model of sanctity and of virtue.

He dwelt during thirty-three years on this earth, of which He was the Creator and the Lord. Before leaving it on the day of the Ascension, in order to enter again into the glory of His Father, He has found the means in the Holy Eucharist of dwelling always with us and in us, even to that solemn day when He will descend, full of glory

and of majesty, to judge the living and the dead ; that is to say, the good and the bad, to render to each one according to his works !

When He was in our midst, He declared openly that He was the Son of God made man, the Envoy of the Heavenly Father. He called Himself God, and He proved His saying by works which God alone could do. "If you do not believe my words, believe at least my miracles," said He in effect to the rebellious Jews. By a single word, by the sole touch of His hand, He restored sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, motion and strength to the paralyzed and to the infirm ; appeased by a gesture the winds and the tempest; multiplied the loaves of bread in the desert, in order to feed the innumerable crowds that followed Him so eagerly to hear His words ; in short, He raised the

dead to life, and every one knows the touching and memorable history of the raising to life of Lazarus.

Jesus Christ then has proven His divinity in an unexceptionable manner ; so that ignorance alone, or bad faith prevent people from adoring Him. If He has veiled His divine majesty under poor and humble appearances, it is because He has wished to do so in order to take on Himself the expiation and painful consequences of the sins of the world. He became poor in order to make atonement for our inordinate love of riches ; He humbled Himself to expiate our pride ; He suffered in order to atone for forbidden pleasures ; He wished to die and to die on a cross in order to redeem us from eternal death. It is then through love for us, and not for any want of power, that Our Lord Jesus Christ did not manifest Himself

all resplendent in glory : it is only at the end of the world, when He will come again to judge mankind, that we all will be witnesses of His glory.

We should love him more on this account ; because the measure of His humiliations, is the measure of His mercy ; and Jesus is not only our God, He is moreover our good and our exceedingly good God.

Let us prostrate ourselves at His feet, as the Apostle St. Thomas who was so incredulous at first, and even obstinately incredulous : he did not wish to believe in the Resurrection of his Master, although the other disciples assured him that they had seen with their eyes Jesus Christ arisen again, that they had touched Him with their hands, heard Him with their ears, and that too at various times. "Unless," said Thomas, "I shall see in His hands the print of

the nails and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side I will not believe.” Eight days after the Resurrection, St. Thomas and the other Apostles being again assembled in the hall of the Cenacle, the doors and windows being shut, Jesus Christ appeared suddenly in the midst of them and turning towards the astonished St. Thomas said: “Thomas, put in thy finger hither and see my hands, and bring hither thy hand and put it into my side; and be not incredulous, but faithful.” The Apostle, overcome by the evidence prostrated himself at the feet of Jesus and cried out: “My Lord and my God!” “Because thou hast seen me Thomas, thou hast believed:” said Our Saviour rebukingly to him; “*Blessed are they who have not seen and have believed!*”

These blessed ones are those faithful

Christians who adore Jesus Christ as their Saviour and their God ; in heaven they will see Him face to face and enjoy with Him His eternal happiness.

Those who do not wish to believe in Jesus Christ are the reprobate : they will have no part in the salvation of the just, and the eternal despair of hell will be the just punishment of their revolt.

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## VII.

IS IT ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN THAT THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IS THE ONLY TRUE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST ?

You see, my dear reader, that the existence of your soul, the existence of God, the divinity of the Christian religion and of Jesus Christ, its Head and Author, are indeed very great truths, demonstrated by the common sense of

mankind, based on reasoning that every one can understand ; truths evident and clear as day. The divine authority of the Catholic Church is also one of these great truths.

Some even of the unbelieving ones of our days assert this ; and Proudhon, the boldest among them, says, that from the moment that any one believed in *God*, it was necessary to believe in *Jesus Christ* and to submit to the authority of the Catholic Church. “Believe as I do,” said he to Protestants and Atheists ; “or otherwise go on your knees at the feet of the Pope ! One must be logical ; and when one adopts a principle, he must know how to draw from it all the consequences.”

The same Proudhon however said : “God is the only evil. Property is robbery. A perfect government is anarchy.” Common sense necessarily re-

volted against these follies, and it was impossible, absolutely impossible, for an honest man, however incredulous to espouse the side of this enthusiast.

And it is this same Proudhon, who takes it upon himself to prove logically and without giving any quarter, that one cannot, that one should not stop on the road, and that from the moment that one does not wish to adopt his doctrines, one must, whether he wills it or not, enter the Catholic Church, kneel and remain at the feet of the Pope, the Vicar of Christ and Head of the Church.

For us who have the happiness to believe in *God* and in *Jesus Christ*, there is a very simple means of distinguishing between the different Churches (or religious societies) that call themselves the true Church of Jesus Christ, which alone has the right to our obedience and to our love. In the Gospel we read that

our Lord, after having heard the Apostle St. Peter say to him before all the Apostles : “Thou art Christ the Son of the Living God !” addressed him in these memorable words : “Blessed art thou Simon Bar Jona, because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in heaven. And I say to thee : That thou art Peter ; and upon this rock I will build my Church.”

Mark, Christ speaks of His Church ; “I will build *my Church*.” Then He has a Church, that is to say, He has founded on the earth a religious society composed of all His disciples, and organized in a certain manner. Not only Jesus Christ has a Church, but He has only one Church ; He did not say, my Churches, but distinctly “*my Church*.”

Among the different Churches which call themselves the true Church of *Jesus Christ* by what *evident* sign will

Christians recognize this only true Church? Oh! my God! It is very easy to know it, and it is *Jesus Christ* Himself who points it out to us. “Thou art *Peter*,” said He, “and upon this rock I will build my Church.”

Behold the sign, behold the certain mark that distinguishes the true Church from all the false churches. The true Church of *Jesus Christ* is the Church which rests upon St. Peter, that is to say on the Pope, the successor of St. Peter, inheritor of his office and of his Episcopal See and Head of the Church even to the end of the world.

The Catholic Church alone, by the confession of all, is founded on St. Peter, on the authority of the Pope; it alone, has the Pope for spiritual Chief, for Sovereign Pontiff, for Doctor, for Judge and for Pastor. Then, alone among all the Christian Societies who

call themselves the Church of Jesus Christ, the Holy, Catholic, Apostolical, Roman Church is, according to the very words of Our Saviour, *evidently* the only true Church.

From the time of St. Peter, the Popes, Bishops of Rome and successors of the prince of the Apostles, governed the Church in the name of *Jesus Christ*; there are no Bishops truly Catholic and Pastors truly legitimate but those who recognize the Pope for their Chief, as in the beginning the Apostles recognized St. Peter for their sole Chief, and under this title, they obeyed him in all things. And if a Christian wishes to know whether he is in the true Church of *Jesus Christ* or not, he has but to ask himself this simple question : Am I in the Church that obeys the Pope, in the Church of the Pope ?

Protestants sometimes call us *Papists*.

They think, by thus addressing us, that they insult us. Without intending it they proclaim our first title of glory : in calling us *Papists*, that is to say *disciples of the Pope*, they confess what we have just been speaking about: what especially distinguishes the Catholics from all others, is their dependence on the Pope. We are *Papists*, *disciples of the Pope*, as we are Christians, *disciples of Christ*: we are Papists, because we are Christians and Catholics.

Then it is absolutely certain that the Catholic Church is the true Church, and that all Christians are obliged, if they wish to remain faithful to *Jesus Christ* and to *God*, to enter and to remain in the Catholic Church.

There is but one Church, because there is but one Christ, but one faith, but one baptism ; and there is but one Christ, but one religion, because there

is but one God. Only one God, only one Christ, only one Church. All these are bound together and make but one.

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## VIII.

IS IT ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN THAT WE CANNOT BE DECEIVED IN HEARKENING TO THE POPE AND THE BISHOPS, THE PASTORS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH ?

It is absolutely certain that we cannot be deceived in obeying the Pope and the Catholic Bishops, because in obeying them, it is Jesus Christ Himself that we obey, and to obey Jesus Christ is to obey God Himself.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, in sending the first Pope and the first Bishops to men, in order to preach to them Religion, addressed them in these solemn words: “Receive ye the Holy Ghost. As the Father hath sent me I also send

you. Going therefore teach ye all nations: baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Preach the Gospel to every creature: He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: but he that believeth not, shall be condemned. He that heareth you heareth me; he that despiseth you despiseth me. And behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world."

He said, moreover, to St. Peter the first Pope: "And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven.

These words of the Son of God have no need of explanation. They clearly show that the authority of the Pope and of the Bishops, successors of St.

Peter and of the Apostles, is the authority of Jesus Christ Himself, and that when the Pope teaches, commands or condemns, it is Jesus Christ, it is God Himself who by the mouth of His representative here below, teaches, commands, condemns. Always assisted by God, when he speaks to the Church, the Pope cannot be deceived, consequently he cannot deceive us either : his word, his authority is the infallible word, the supreme authority of Our Lord Jesus Christ No person on the earth, understand this well, no person has the right to say to the Pope: "You are mistaken ; I will not obey you." Obedience to the Pastors of the Church and principally to the supreme Pastor, such is then, for every human creature, the very simple and very easy means of knowing exactly what it is necessary to believe, what it is necessary to do, what

it is necessary to avoid in order to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.

It suffices to hear one's priest, who is sent by the Bishop, who is in his turn the representative of the Pope, the representative of God. By this union of faith, of teaching and of perfect obedience between our priests, our Bishops and the Pope, each Christian is united to Jesus Christ, as the fruit of a tree is united to the root by the trunk, by the larger branches and by the smaller branches to which it is attached. The Catholic Church may be likened to a great tree planted by God Himself, and which bears all the elect.

It is not necessary to be learned, not even to know how to read to be a Christian: it suffices to be obedient, to have an humble sincere and faithful heart. And every one is capable of this good disposition: each of us can

have it, if he wishes ; those who have it, God blesses and fills them with his graces ; those who have it not, God rejects them as proud and rebellious persons, as they, in truth, are. These are the branches detached from the trunk, the boughs withered and dead. Such are the poor Protestants, and especially their ministers.

Nothing is sweeter and more simple than to obey : it is disobedience that has caused the loss of the bad angels and of all the heretics ; it is obedience that has saved all the faithful and opens to them the gates of Paradise.

Accessible to all, to the poor as to the rich, to the ignorant as to the learned, the Christian religion, which the Catholic Church teaches to the world, is likewise the popular religion, the religion of those whom God loves with a love of preference : the lowly, the poor,

the feeble. If all should love it and practice it with gratitude, the laborers and the poor ones of the earth should do it with still more gratitude than the others. The Catholic Church is, indeed, the mother of the people, the protectress of all those who suffer on the earth: a poor person who insults the Church, is a bad son who insults his mother.

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## IX.

IS IT ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN THAT IT DOES NOT SUFFICE TO BE AN HONEST MAN, BUT THAT IT IS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY TO PRACTISE RELIGION ?

The Catholic Religion, which the Church teaches us, is the law of God, taught to men by the ministers of God. Tell me, is one free to obey the civil

laws or not? Evidently we must obey them, under a penalty of a fine or of imprisonment. If this is true for human laws, what will it be for divine laws, for the religious laws that God imposes on us through His Church?

In matters of religion, as in matters of propriety, one cannot do all that he wishes to do: just as there are obligatory laws which very properly point out what a proprietor, what a farmer, what a merchant, &c., *should* and *should not* do; in the same manner there are obligatory laws that teach us very distinctly what we should do and avoid in matters of conscience. Divine justice, of which human justice is but a copy, is ever hanging over the heads of the violators of the divine laws, in order to punish them as they deserve, either in this world by pains and by afflictions, or in the world to come by

the terrible atonement of Purgatory, or by the eternal fire of hell, which is much more terrible still.

These laws of conscience, to which we are absolutely obliged to submit, are the commandments of God, the commandments of the Church, and the practice of the Christian virtues : humility, charity, meekness, mercy, pardon of injuries, chastity, penance, labor, love of God, filial devotion towards the Blessed Virgin. The practice of our Christian duties consists in this : the prayers of each day, the sanctification of Sundays, the observance of the abstinences and the fasts of the Church, when health or labor does not prevent us from observing them ; it consists also in the frequentation of the sacraments, at least once a year, at Easter time, and more frequently if we can ; in a word, it consists in obedience to all

that the Pastors of the Church command us, in the name of God. It does not suffice then to be an honest man according to the world, that is to say, to lead before men an honorable life ; one must without doubt be as they say an honest man ; but besides, one must be a good Christian, a good Catholic ; one must seriously practice his religion, pray and adore God each day, go to Mass and to the offices of the Church on Sunday, sanctify the Lord's day, hear and respect the Priest, confess and communicate, from time to time, do as much good as possible, give to all good example, suffer patiently the trials of life for the love of Jesus Christ, in fine, to live for God's sake. All this is obligatory : these are not simply counsels, but laws, commandments properly so called.

Honest people according to the world

fail in the first, the most important of all their duties, viz.: in their duties towards God and towards His Church. In practice they are apostates, that is to say, men who live without religion, as if they were not baptized, as if they were not children of the Church, as if Jesus Christ was not their Redeemer and their Master, as if there was no God, no judgment, no eternity, no heaven, no hell. This indifference is more than a sin, it is a crime, and a crime the more dangerous, as those who render themselves guilty of it will come by degrees to grow torpid, and become so completely brutalized that they no longer perceive what evil they do, and very often they will end by losing their faith.

All of us, rich and poor, old and young, are created and placed on the earth, not in order to gain money, or to

amuse ourselves, not in order to repose after having made a fortune, but principally and above all in order to serve God, to practice His faith, to be a good Christian, to live well and to die well, and thus to attain the eternal happiness of Heaven.

Those who do not live in this manner are fools of the worst sort and very guilty indeed: Christians alone are those who are *truly honest*, that is to say, men who lead a truly good and honorable life, and who fulfil in a worthy manner all their duties towards *God*, towards their neighbor and towards themselves.

May God bless you, my good reader, and grant you the grace of understanding well and practicing well all that I have just said to you.

FINIS.

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*TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH*

BY A

CATHOLIC PRIEST.

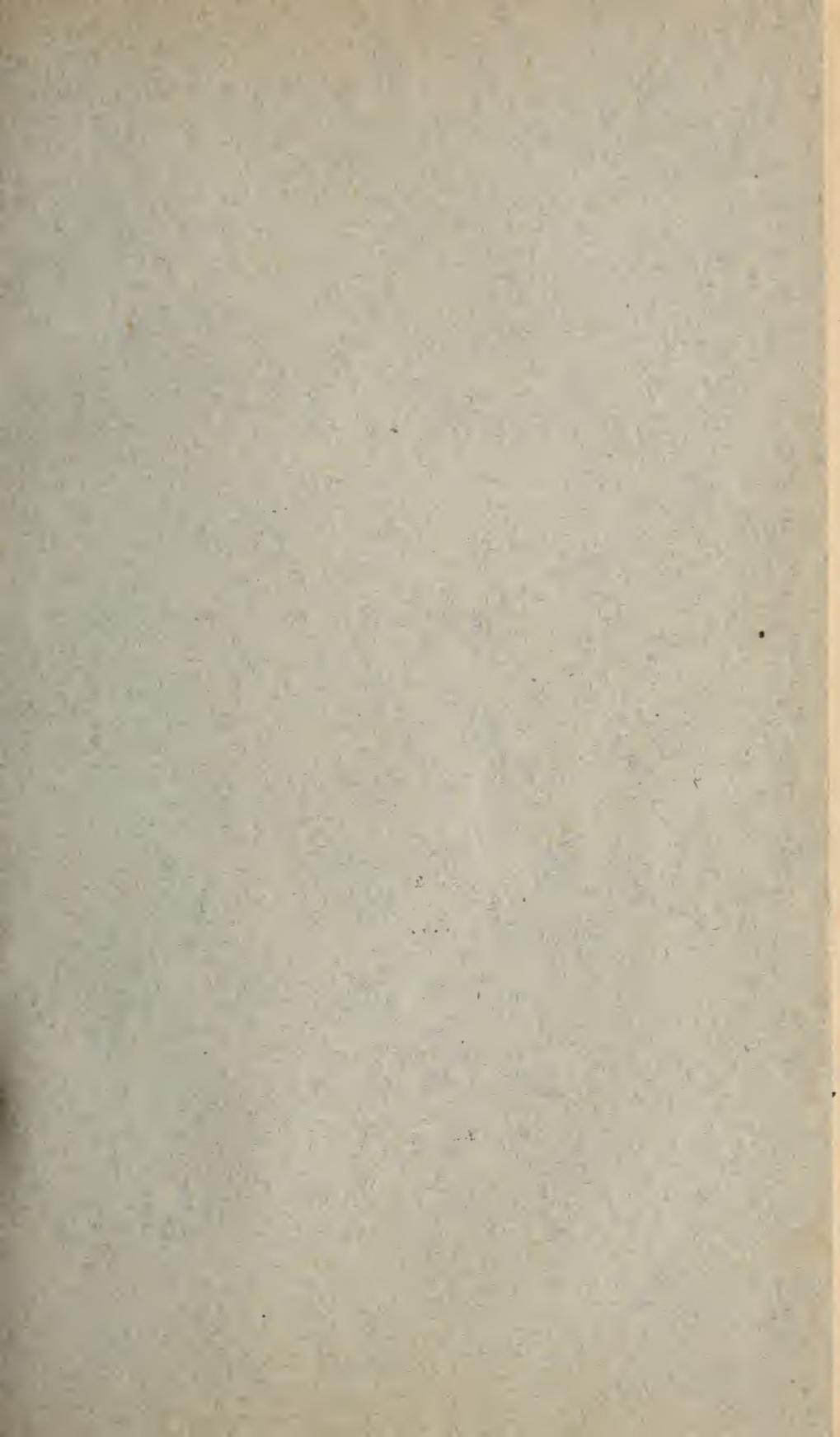
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